

# Renovation reality check

TV shows have boosted the valuation of home renovations in Queensland, but don't believe all that you see

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INCREASES in stamp duty, a slump in property sales and a flurry of home renovation television shows has seen the level of spending in renovations increase in Queensland.

The latest HIA report says the annual value of renovations in Queensland in the past financial year was \$7.2 billion. While the spending figures are up from earlier in the year, they are still lower than the same time last year.

The HIA predicts the spending will increase in the next two years, taking the value of total renovations to \$8.29 billion.

Industry groups have warned renovators not to get caught up in the hype of reality television shows and think it is a quick and cheap process.

Archicentre Queensland

state manager Ian Agnew said renovators should spend more in the planning stage to save in the long term.

"Invest some money in sitting down with someone like an architect and talk about what is possible and how much it is going to cost," he said.

This could start around \$700 but could save thousands in the end.

He said reality TV shows do not focus on how long it could take to get council approval, possible hidden problems that are only discovered during the process such as asbestos which can be expensive to remove and how much labour costs are really going to be.

NSW buyers agent Patrick Bright says renovators risk ending up with a much bigger bill than they expected because many home improvement shows don't reveal the full costs.

"While they are great enter-



**HIRED PROFESSIONALS:** Claire and Gavin Blake, of Bardon in Brisbane's inner-west, gave up on trying to do their renovations by themselves.

Picture: Nathan Richter

tainment, the biggest downfall from programs like *The Renovators* and *The Block* is they don't reveal to viewers the real cost of labour as well as the

total costs associated with buying and selling real estate like stamp duty, legals, marketing and selling agents costs," he said.

First-time home renovators Claire and Gavin Blake, of Bardon in Brisbane, are among those to discover how involved the process is compared to

## RENO TIPS

- Spend money on professional advice
- Check council rules and regulations
- Get detailed plans
- Get accurate costings for everything
- Have a contingency fund in place for unexpected problems

what you see on the box. After three months of planning the renovation and 2½ weeks waiting for approval to do the job, they decided to get professionals to do the work.

With their plans including an entire internal renovation and a swimming pool, Mr Blake said renovating was not as "quick and easy" as television shows made it out to be, particularly when it came to maintaining the budget.

Mr Blake said they still enjoyed watching the programs because it gave them a lot of ideas.

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